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McSweeney. Claims 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gillard and further in view of Evers. In addition, the drawings are objected to for failure to show the grille of claim 15. Claim 14 is objected to as being of improper dependent form.

In response to the above, new claims 16 to 26 are presented herewith. Base claim 16 combines the subject matter of cancelled original claims 1, 5 and 13. Applicant respectfully submits that the newly claimed delivery box is novel and inventive, and advantageous over and above all devices described in the references cited. It is particularly noted that the only reference cited by the Examiner against cancelled claim 13 is GB2354286A (Gillard). The latter does disclose a goods receptacle set in an external wall of a building with lockable outer and inner doors, but it is pointed out that the locking means for each door are operable by a conventional key, a swipe card or smart card, or a keypad for the entry of a PIN number. In clear and advantageous contradistinction to this, the outer door of Applicant's delivery box is provided with a digital computerized locking system operable by pre-arranged single-use code numbers. This arrangement provides a much higher degree of security than Gillard, as a person making a delivery is only able to open the outer door on a single occasion using the code number given to him for the express purpose of making that particular delivery. Accordingly, claim 16 is firmly believed to be patentable. Dependent claims 17 to 25, of which claim 17 has no counterpart in the original claims, are all dependent directly or indirectly on claim 16, and are likewise considered patentable. Claim 25 (original claim 14) and also claim 22 (original claim 10) have been amended to place them in proper dependent form. There is now no counterpart of the original claim 15 relating to a grille not illustrated. The indefinite expressions objected to by the

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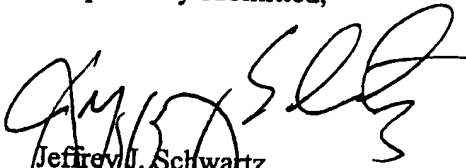
Examiner in the claims have been replaced or removed. Claim 26 also has no counterpart in the original claims, and is an independent method claim which corresponds broadly to claim 16 and is thus believed to be patentable.

The description and abstract have been amended for conformity with the new claims, and a minor clerical error has been corrected at line 16 on page 4 (original text). No new matter has been added.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

For all of the reasons discussed above, Applicant submits that all of the claims in the case are now in condition for allowance. Such action is therefore requested at an early date. If the examiner believes that issues remain for discussion, he is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number or e-mail address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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2002. Date of Signature: June 27, 2002.

Signature: 

Karen Walker

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

Paragraph 1 on page 1 has been amended as follows:

This invention relates to a delivery box for goods including groceries ordered by Internet, mail or otherwise; for mail; and for other articles. It also relates to a method of delivering articles to a building equipped with such a box.

Paragraphs 3-6 on page 1 (lines 9-18) have been deleted, as follows:

[The invention comprises a delivery box adapted to be secured to a fixed support and having an outer door which is openable to enable deliveries to be placed inside the box but which locks automatically when it is then closed.

Preferably, the support is a wall of a building.

The box may be bolted internally to the exterior surface of the wall.

Alternatively, the box is built into the wall. The built-in box may have a rear door openable directly into, and lockable from, the interior of the building.]

After paragraph 6 (line 16) on page 1 and before the paragraph beginning "The outer door of the built-in box...", the following new paragraphs have been added:

According to one aspect of the invention, a delivery box adapted in use to be built into an external wall of a building has an outer door which is openable to enable deliveries to be placed inside the box but which locks automatically when said door is then closed and a rear door openable directly into, and lockable from, the interior of the building, the outer door being provided with a digital computerised locking system operable by pre-arranged single-use code

numbers.

Preferably, the box has proportions which in use are secured in seams in the wall.

Paragraph 10 on page 1 (line 24) has been amended as follows:

The outer door may have a [bank type] deposit drawer.

Paragraph 11 on page 1 (line 25) has been amended as follows:

The box [is preferably adapted to be supplied with mains electricity] preferably has a connection to a mains electricity supply.

Paragraph 12 on page 1 (line 27) has been amended as follows:

The box may [be] include a chilled storage compartment.

Paragraphs 14, 15, and 16 on page 2 (lines 2-7) have been deleted, as follows:

[The outer door may have a digital computerised locking system operable by pre-arranged single-use code numbers.

The box may be adapted to be connected to an existing alarm system.

The box may have an external child-resistant grille with an opening catch at a high level.]

After paragraph 16 (line 6) on page 2 and before the paragraph beginning "The invention will now be described...", the following new paragraphs have been added:

The box may have a connection to an alarm system.

According to another aspect of the invention, a method of delivering articles to a building equipped with a delivery box for accepting the articles which is built into an external wall of a building and has an outer door with an automatic locking system which is operable by a single-use access code, a compartment for storing the articles, and a lockable rear door for accessing the stored articles from inside the building, comprises inserting a single-use code into the locking system, opening the outer door, placing the articles to be delivered in the compartment, closing the outer door so that said door automatically locks and cancels the code used for opening the outer door, opening the rear door from within the building, removing the articles from the compartment, and programming the locking system of the outer door with a new code.

Paragraph 26 on page 3 (line 3) has been amended as follows:

Referring now to Figures 1 and 2 of the drawings, a large delivery box indicated generally at 10 is made of metal and/or strong plastics material and is shown built into an external masonry wall indicated generally at 12 of a house. The wall conventionally comprises an outer leaf 14 and an inner leaf 16 separated by a cavity 18. The box 10 is securely fixed in the wall 12 by means of projections (not shown) which are concreted into seams in the masonry, and has an outer door 20 with a handle 22 and hinges 24 which is practically flush with the exterior surface 26 of the wall 12. The box 10 projects a short distance into the interior of the house in order to have a useful front-to-back dimension, and has a rear door 28 with a handle 34 openable directly into, and lockable from, said interior to facilitate the removal of deliveries. The box 10 is adapted to be supplied with mains electricity from within the house, to enable it to include both a chilled storage compartment 30 and a frozen storage compartment 32, and also

lighting (not shown) if desired. The outer door 20 is openable to enable deliveries to be placed inside the box, but is arranged to lock automatically when it is then closed. This is effectively achieved by employing a digital computerised locking system (not shown) operable by pre-arranged code numbers. Said system can be button- or card-operated in such a way that the door 20 is opened by a pre-arranged single-use code number which is erased from the system's memory when said door is closed and self-locked. The box 10 is adapted to be connected to a burglar alarm system (not shown) existing within the house. A typical size for a large box 10 suitable for accepting, inter alia, deliveries of food from a supermarket is, say, 1200 millimetres in internal height by 600 millimetres in internal width and depth, but a height of more than two metres is preferably avoided as this would require planning permission. It will be understood that the delivery box 10 just described is a de luxe or top of the range unit. Many of its features can be omitted without departing from the scope of the invention [, and a less sophisticated locking system for the outer door 20 such as a high-security Yale-type lock can be employed, in which case said door is left unlocked until a delivery has been made)]. [The] An external child-resistant grille (not shown) with an opening catch disposed at a high level so as to be difficult for a child to reach then becomes a desirable adjunct to the box 10.

Paragraph 27 beginning on page 4 (line 20) has been amended as follows:

Referring now to Figures 3 and 3a of the drawings, a smaller delivery box indicated generally at 40 which is still large enough to accept supermarket and mail order deliveries is built into an external masonry wall 41 of a house. The box 40 has only an outer door 42 with a handle 44 and hinges 46, which is openable to enable deliveries to be placed inside said box but

which locks automatically when it is closed. The locking system employed [can be either] is of the digital computerised type [or of the high-security Yale-type] hereinbefore referred to, and an external grille as described in the preceding paragraph can be fitted if desired. The door 42 of the box 40 is fitted with a large letter deposit flap 48 which conveniently opens into a receptacle 49 mounted on the back of said door.

Paragraph 30 on page 5 (line 16) has been amended as follows:

Figures 5 and 5a of the drawings show a large delivery box having an outer and only door 62 with a handle 64 and hinges 65 which is secured to the external surface of an exterior wall 66 of a house and to a concrete path 68 adjoining said wall by means of internal and thus inaccessible masonry bolts 70. A typical size for the box 60 is, say, 1500 millimetres in height by 600 millimetres in internal width and depth. The door 62 is openable to enable deliveries to be placed inside said box but locks automatically when it is closed, the locking system being [either] of the digital computerised type [or of the high-security Yale-type] hereinbefore referred to.